

Rep. Baird Secures \$33 Million for Columbia River Projects-Dredging, Jetty Repair, and Port Maintenance Projects to Benefit- (May 24, 2006)

Washington, D.C. - Congressman Brian Baird secured \$33,311,000 for Columbia River projects in the Fiscal Year 2007 Energy and Water Appropriations Act that passed the House today. The bill is now headed to the Senate for its approval.

Congressman Baird helped secure:

½ \$15 million for the Columbia River Channel Deepening Project

½ \$18.273 million for jetty repairs at the mouth of the Columbia

½ \$38,000 for Port of Ilwaco maintenance dredging

½Transporting goods in and out of our region's ports fuels local job growth and economic development," said Congressman Baird. "These projects will help our port communities remain competitive and continue delivering Washington's goods around the world. These projects will also help protect the environmental vitality of the Columbia River and surrounding areas."

Congressman Baird had serious concerns about cuts to the Army Corps of Engineers budget included in today's bill. However, he ultimately voted for the bill because of the many benefits it will bring to critically important projects in Southwest Washington.

Congressman Baird secured funding for the following Columbia River projects:

Columbia River Channel Deepening Project: \$15 million

The Columbia River Channel Deepening project is a major transportation, economic development, and international trade issue for our region. More than 40,000 local jobs with an average annual wage of \$46,000 are dependent on Columbia River maritime commerce. Approximately \$1.8 billion per year in personal income is generated by maritime activity, and over \$208 million in state and local taxes are generated each year by Columbia River maritime shipping.

Over 80 percent of the vessels in transpacific trade are larger ships that are constrained by the current authorized 40-foot depth of the Columbia River navigation channel. The Columbia River navigation channel needs to be deepened from 40 to 43-feet in order to enable these ships to access and serve our region's businesses, farmers, ports, and communities.

In January 2003, the Army Corps of Engineers determined the benefit-to-cost ratio of the Columbia River Channel Deepening project to be 1.7 to 1 (\$18.8 million in annual transportation savings vs. \$11.0 million in annual costs). For every \$1 invested in the project, the nation receives an economic benefit of \$1.66 in return.

The estimated total construction cost of the project is \$148.4 million, which includes an estimated federal share of \$92.6 million and an estimated share of \$55.4 million for the states of Oregon and Washington and sponsoring ports. By the end of 2005, 25 percent of the navigation channel was deepened to 43 feet. Another major section of the channel is expected to be deepened this year.

The Channel Deepening project includes restoration of tidal marsh, wetlands, native riparian vegetation, shallows, and fish access to spawning streams.

Congressman Baird helped secured \$15 million for channel deepening in last year's Energy and Water Appropriations Act.

Jetty Repair: \$18.273 million

The North and South jetties make it possible for the world's largest ocean-going vessels to sail up the Columbia River, but they are susceptible to erosion. If vulnerable points of the jetties breach, the shipping lane at the mouth of the Columbia River could clog within a matter of weeks, impairing navigation and creating hazardous conditions for commercial and recreational boaters.

Congressman Baird secured \$18.186 million for North and South Jetty repair in the FY07 Energy and Water Appropriations Act. This funding, however, will focus primarily on South Jetty repairs in part because the \$27.186 million that Congressman Baird secured in last year's bill focused primarily on interim repairs to the North Jetty which have since been completed.

Port of Ilwaco Maintenance Dredging: \$38,000

Maintenance dredging is essential to the Port of Ilwaco for both safety and economic reasons. The Port serves vessels from the entire Pacific Rim including Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii, and Canada, and is sometimes the only viable coastal tuna port. Commercial and recreational fishermen rely on the channel depth shown on navigation charts. Without adequate maintenance dredging of the three-mile channel through Baker Bay, conditions could become dangerous for mariners.

Congressman Baird secured \$600,000 for Port of Ilwaco maintenance dredging in last year's Energy and Water Appropriations Act.

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